

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

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**CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL PRESENTS 1997 SCHOOL BUS DRIVER OF
THE YEAR AWARD**

In San Diego today, on the eve of *School Bus Drivers' Day*, California Highway Patrol (CHP) Division Commander Chief D. J. Watkins, presented Ms. Lilia Cedano Rios with the prestigious 1997 School Bus Driver of the Year Award. "The CHP is extremely proud to present this award to Ms. Rios," stated Chief D. J. Watkins. "The heroism displayed during that fateful day was clearly above and beyond the call of duty."

On October 1, 1996, the school bus Ms. Rios was driving was hi-jacked by a man with a knife who threatened to kill all 31 children on board if he was not taken to Las Vegas, Nevada. Ms. Rios was not only able to persuade the hijacker not to harm the children, through a subsequent struggle, the hijacker fell from the bus and Ms. Rios was able to secure the bus, thereby preventing further access to the children. These actions undoubtedly saved the lives of these children.

Nomination criteria include such attributes as possessing outstanding knowledge, leadership, skills and support for the advancement of the school bus driving profession, or judgment and bravery which prevents injury or loss of life. CHP offices, school districts, contractors, or any agency promoting school bus safety throughout the state submit nominations each year. The final decision is made by panel members consisting of a CHP Deputy Chief and representatives from the California Department of Education, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the California Association of School Transportation Officials.

"Ms. Rios is an outstanding example of the dedicated men and women in California's school bus industry which we entrust with our children each school day. This special recognition on the eve of School Bus Drivers' Day, should remind all of us to thank our school bus drivers for a job well done," added Chief D. J. Watkins.

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